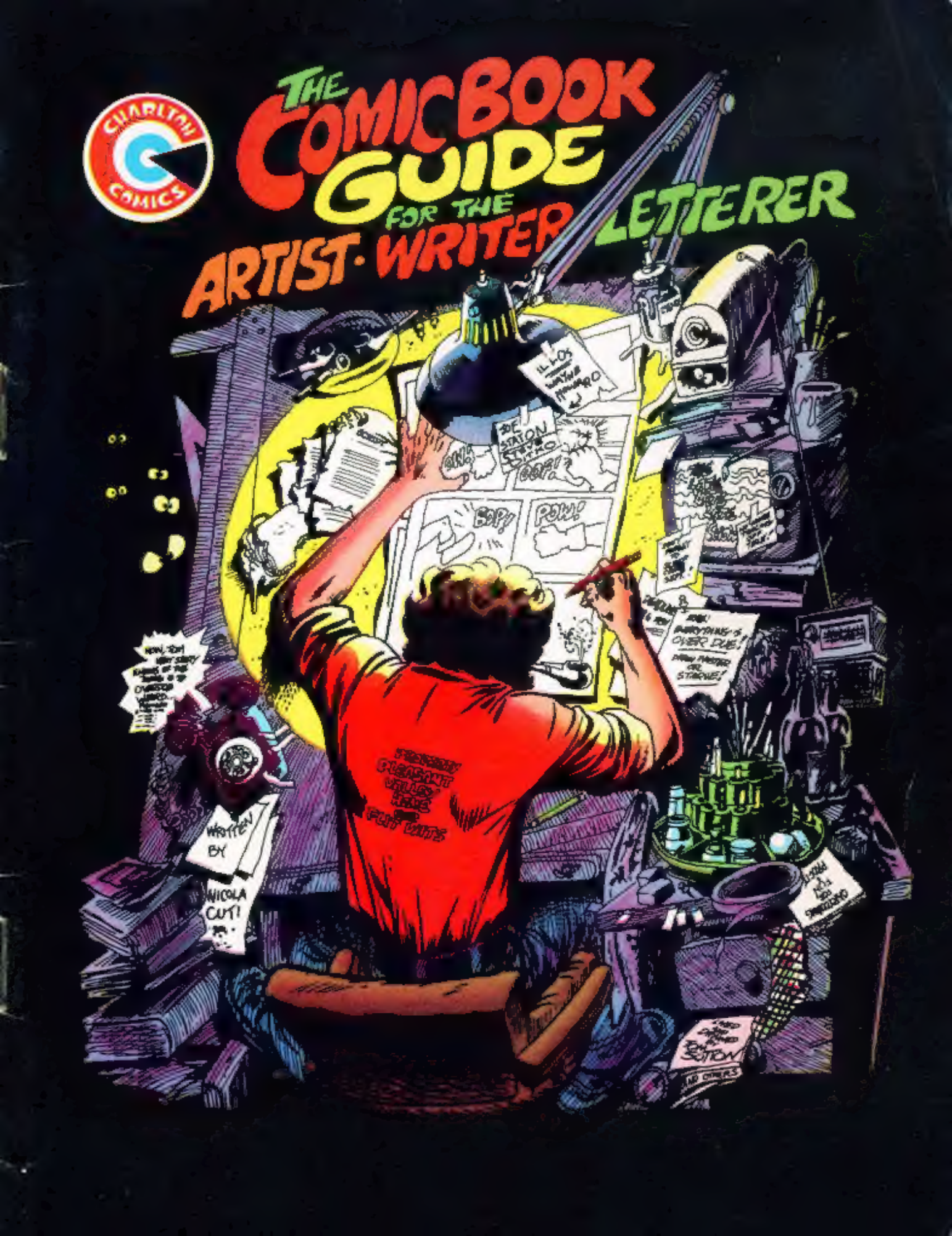

CHARLTON COMICS
THE COMIC BOOK GUIDE FOR THE ARTIST-WRITER LETTERER
BAM!
BOP!
POW!
OOOF!
WRITTEN BY
NICOLA CUTI

©COPYRIGHT 1973
CHARLTON PUBLICATIONS, INC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

THE COMIC BOOK GUIDE
For
Artist/Writer/Letterer

EDITOR.....GEORGE WILDMAN
ASSOCIATE EDITOR.....JOE GILL
WRITER/ART DIRECTOR.....NICOLA CUTI
LETTERING ILLUSTRATIONS.....FRANK BRAVO
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS.....WAYNE HOWARD
TOM SUTTON
JOE STATON
STEVE DITKO

CONTENTS

4/INTRODUCTION

ART

5/A. TERMINOLOGY
6/B. SIZE OF ART
9/C. TOOLS
11/D. DRAWING FROM THE SCRIPT
12/E. PANEL ART
12/F. ANATOMY
17/G. REDUCTION AND REPRODUCTION

WRITING

18/A. SCRIPT
18/B. STORY LINE
20/C. CODE
21/D. GRAMMAR
21/E. SYNOPSIS

LETTERING

22/A. EQUIPMENT
22/B. YOU BEGIN TO LETTER
22/C. LETTER STYLES
22/D. BALLOONS
25/E. PANELS
25/F. LETTERING BOOKS
25/G. SWIPES

COMIC GROUPS

26/A. HUMOR
26/B. ADVENTURE
27/C. ROMANCE

28/THE COVER

COMICS CODE

30/A. GENERAL STANDARDS
31/B. GENERAL STANDARDS
32/C. GENERAL STANDARDS
32/DIALOGUE
33/RELIGION
33/COSTUME
33/MARRIAGE AND SEX
34/SOME CLOSING ADVICE
34/CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

This is not a "how to draw or write" instruction course. The author assumes that you are already a budding young talent anxious to present your work to the world, however, every time you send your portfolio to an editor or walk into his office he says:"Beautiful stuff but it's not comics."

What is "comics"?
What do you mean: "The 'inks' are sloppy?"
What do you mean: "Nice synopsis but we need a script?"

Okay, so most of you know what "inks" are but we're going to start from scratch anyway and *read the whole book!* The secret of success is to first get your foot into the door. You may want to be a comic artist but if there's an opening for a letterer ... take it! It's much easier to get work when you're inside the industry than to break down the brick walls.

BEGIN!

ART

A - TERMINOLOGY

When an editor criticizes your work he's going to use comic jargon. If you don't want to appear to be the runny nosed kid that you are you should know what he's talking about. Here are some common comic book terms.

1. **PANEL:** A single framed picture on a page of comics.
2. **PANEL BORDER:** The lines which surround the panel.
3. **OPEN PANEL:** A panel which lacks borders.
4. **FLASH BACK:** Panels which refer to a past action. Their borders are clouds rather than ruled lines.
5. **SPLASH PAGE:** The first page of a story. It is usually a large single panel, loaded with action or heavy on mood which will grab the reader and make him want to read the story.
6. **INDICIA:** A legal statement located just below the splash on the first story in the book. It is of interest to the artist because it contains the name of the Editor and the address of the company. Also, an artist may be asked to leave room on his splash for the indicia. (The amount of room will be explained later.)
7. **BALLOONS:** Oval shaped areas which contain the dialog. The most common balloon is cloud or oval shaped but other shapes will be discussed later. A stem points to the character who speaks.
8. **CAPTION:** A narrative statement usually located at the top of the panel.
9. **LOGO:** A title design which is repeated from book to book and/or story.
10. **PENCILS:** The pencil drawings of a story one step before the ink is applied.
11. **INKS:** The ink drawings which are applied over the pencil sketches. They are usually accomplished in brush and/or pen.
12. **BLACKS:** Areas filled with solid black ink which help to give mood, contrast or dimension to the artwork in the panel.
13. **GREYS:** Same as blacks only grey in tone.
14. **RENDERING:** Details such as shadows, wrinkles and shine marks which give life and dimension to art work.

15. FEATHERING: A series of brush strokes used to express soft shadows. They are usually found on rounded objects to soften the edges of heavy shadows or to express wrinkles. Feathering may also be used around bright flashes of light, or highlights in the hair.
16. SWIPES: Drawings or photos which an artist uses as a reference for his own drawings. Use advisedly. Strive to develop your creative talent or swipes will become an all too available *'crutch'*.
17. SILVER PRINTS: A Photo of the art reduced to actual comic book size. These photos are not glossy but printed on special paper so that a colorist may use his dyes to indicate the color.
18. COVER BOARD: A large sheet of drawing stock on which the cover of a comic is drawn or pasted in.

B - SIZE OF ART

1. PAGE SIZE: All art must be reduced to the size of a comic book page. Although it may seem that the easiest way to work is actual size ... it is not! You will be unable to add much detail and your lines will seem crude and bold. The standard size is 10" x 15" but any size that is reduceable to a comic page size 6" x 9" is usually acceptable. Don't get carried away, it has to fit through the door.

2. SPLASH PAGE: If your story is the lead story (first story) then you will have to leave room at the bottom for the indicia. The following chart will tell you how much room to leave.

12" x 18" allow 2⅛"
11" x 16¾" allow 1 15/16"
*10" x 15" allow 1¾"
9½" x 14½" allow 1 11/16"
9" x 13½" allow 1 9/16"

*most commonly used size

3. BORDER SPACING: A ¼" border should surround the panels *if* you are working at a 10" x 15" size. Allow more space for larger sizes and less for smaller scales.

REUNION
THOSE WHO KNEW DANIEL MORTON AND CLED DRAKE CONSIDERED THEM TO BE THE HAPPIEST LOVERS IN THE WORLD... THEY SEEMED MADE FOR EACH OTHER... AND AS THEY SPENT THESE LAST FEW WEEKS BEFORE THEIR WEDDING ENJOYING EACH OTHER'S COMPANY SWIMMING, SAILING, AND STROLLING ALONG THE SHORE BESIDE THE ENCHANTED SEA! NEVER, THEY VOWED, WOULD THEY PART....
ONE LAST KISS, MY DARLING... WE'VE GOT TO GO BACK... A FOG IS ROLLING IN!
WHY THE TEAR, CLED? IT WASN'T ONE OF YOUR PREMONITIONS AGAIN, IS IT?
DON'T LAUGH AT ME, DANIEL... FOR A MOMENT... YOUR FACE WAS BLURRED AND GREEN... AS THOUGH THERE WAS A WALL OF WATER BETWEEN US!
EDITOR- GEORGE WILDMAN
SCRIPT- JOE GILL
ART- JOE STATON
D-52409

SPLASH PAGE

THEY WERE SO VERY NEAR... DANIEL TRIED TO REACH OUT... BUT A CURRENT SWEPT THEM APART....
I CAN'T REACH HER....
CLEO!
CLEO, WHERE ARE YOU!??
I'VE GOT TO FIND HER!
IT CAN'T HAPPEN.... CLEO CAN'T DIE.... I WON'T LET HER!
DANIEL WOULD'VE ALMOST CERTAINLY PERISHED SEARCHING IN THE FOG FOR THE GIRL HE LOVED... IF A BOAT, RETURNING TO PORT, HADN'T BUMPED THE CAPSIZED SAILBOAT!
IT'S A LITTLE CATBOAT, LEW.... LOOKS LIKE DAN MORTON'S!
HE WAS OUT WITH CLEO... I SAW THEM OVER NEAR CROWS ISLAND A FEW HOURS AGO!
STANDARD PAGE

C - TOOLS

1. **DRAWING BOARD:** Set it on an angle, preferably on drafting table, but *never* draw by lying the board flat on a kitchen table. The drawing will be distorted.
2. **DRAFTING TABLE:** Wooden ones are best but if you can't afford one at least get a drawing board.
3. **PENS:** Rapidograph, if you can afford it, but any good lettering pen will do. Try speedball and some flexible points.
4. **BRUSHES:** You can get by with a cheap pen but invest in a good brush even if it means three or more bucks. Wet the bristles and see if it will come to a point. If you've bought a bad brush just use it to fill in the blacks. Windsor-Newton series 7 or Grumbacher are fine for comic work. Number 2 or 3 is a good size.
5. **INK:** The more you pay, the better the ink. Use *only* black india ink. Higgins, Koh-i-noor, and Pelican are the brands most comic artists use.
6. **PENCILS:** Any kind will do. Soft leads smear but they're easier to erase. Hard leads leave lighter lines but dig up the paper. AN HB or No. 2 is preferred.
7. **RULER:** Metal or wooden with metal edge only. Use the plastic ones for scratching your head.
8. **TEE-SQUARE:** Metal are the best. Wooden ones tend to loosen after use.
9. **PUSH PINS:** Not thumb tacks.
10. **COMPASS:** Buy a drafting compass which has an interchangeable point for pencil or ink. Templates may also be used if you own a rapidograph pen.
11. **ERASERS:** You're going to need lots of erasers even if you never make a mistake. Buy *soft* erasers, art gum, kneaded, drafting film eraser.
12. **WHITE:** Buy a bottle of snopake or white tempra paint to correct inking errors. If you can afford an electric eraser buy one ALSO but not instead of white.
13. **PAPER:** Strathmore or bristol board is best. If you want to use sketch paper then hang your artwork on the walls ... don't send them to comics. Use kidd or plate finish whichever you prefer.
14. **RUBBER CEMENT** — for pasting in art or lettering corrections.
15. **CUTTING KNIFE** — for cutting out mistakes. X-acto is good.
16. **TRIANGLES** — 30-60-90 and/or 45, transparent.

TOOLS

INK
BRUSH PENCIL PEN
FOR INK ONLY
WHITE
BRUSH
FOR WHITE ONLY
NOTE WHITE TAPE
ARTGUM
KNEADED
ERASERS
CUTTING KNIFE
RUBBER CEMENT
RULER
RAISED EDGE
LAMP
INK
DRAWING TABLE
DRAWING BOARD
PAPER
SWIPE
TABORET
FOR WATER JARS AND TOOLS
AFTER DIPPING BRUSH IN INK STROKE ON PAPER UNTIL BRISTLES COME TO A POINT
TEE-SQUARE
RAG
FOR WIPING BRUSHES
PUSH PINS
TRI-ANGLE
COMPASS
FOR INK
FOR WHITE
WATER JARS
FOR WASHING OFF BRUSHES

D - DRAWING FROM THE SCRIPT

1. SCRIPT: Read it thoroughly. Try to picture what's going on. Think about what your characters will look like or if you're stuck, get out your swipes to stimulate the creative juices!

2. BREAK DOWNS: Set up the panels on bond paper (Ex: 8½" x 11" typewriter stock) so you will know where to put the large and small panels. Write a few words in each panel to denote action or dialogue. This helps to avoid overlooking or forgetting a balloon later on! You may also prefer to sketch the action. Do this for every page and use this as a guide. Some artists will prefer to do the break downs on the drawing paper. If you're good enough, go ahead.

3. LAY OUTS: Lay outs are done on the stock you will use for your finished art. Lightly pencil in the panel for composition and action. Be sure to leave room for balloons and captions.

4. SWIPES: If you haven't gotten your photos and drawings out after reading the script get them out now. You may want to change some of your layouts if you find a good swipe. Use swipes as a GUIDE. If you rely too heavily on them it will show because some panels will be heavy on detail (the ones you swiped) while others will lack detail which will destroy the balance of your art. Also, the story telling will be disrupted if the characters in the swipe are posed differently then the characters in the story. Be sure to keep a fat swipe file on people, cars, trees, buildings, etc.

5. LETTERING: Turn your work over to a letterer, if that's you, letter now. Some artists prefer to have the lettering done first and then pencil around the balloons.

6. INKS: Ink in your pencils. Outline first then spot your blacks. Feather your shadows and wrinkles, put in your greys and patterns, heavy up the lines in your foreground and on the lower side of objects. Erase your pencils or get your kid brother to do it for a dime a page.

7. GREYS: For color comics do not use too much black or grey but for comics that will be printed in black and white use a good balance of black, white and grey. Here are some methods:

a. WASH: A mixture of india ink and water. There are also dye markers which come in all shades of grey. The effect you get is impressive but difficult to reproduce. Before you use this method, check with your editor since this is rarely used in color comics.

b. CROSS HATCHING: A series of lines which cross each other. Do the lines free hand but try to keep lines coming from the same direction parallel to each other. If the lines are scattered, it will not look casual and free. It will look sloppy.

c. BEN DAY: Plastic sheets of printed patterns with a sticky back. Patterns are printed in line, design and dot but dot is most commonly used. For reproduction it is safest to use 10% - 30% and 30 to 42.5 line. Again, check with your editor to be sure.

d. Craft Tint: Paper sheets with invisible cross hatched patterns printed on them. The patterns become visible when a chemical is applied. This is the easiest and most impressive method to use but like all good things it is the most expensive. Most artists just do certain panels in craft tint and paste them on to a page of regular artwork. Craft tint comes in single and double tone.

E. PANEL ART

1. Lighting: Divide your panel into three levels: Foreground, Middle ground, and Background. Objects in the foreground are darkest except in heavy forest. In forests the background objects are dark. Use your thinnest lines for the background.

2. Gimmicks: When there are long stretches with lots of dialogue and little action use these gimmicks to keep your panels interesting.

a- Close-up: Close-ups of a face or parts of a face are dramatic but should not be over used. This can become a cop-out.

b. Silhouette: Sketch in objects in pencil as detailed as you can, then outline and blacken in. Details give the silhouette life, so do not outline without sketching them in first.

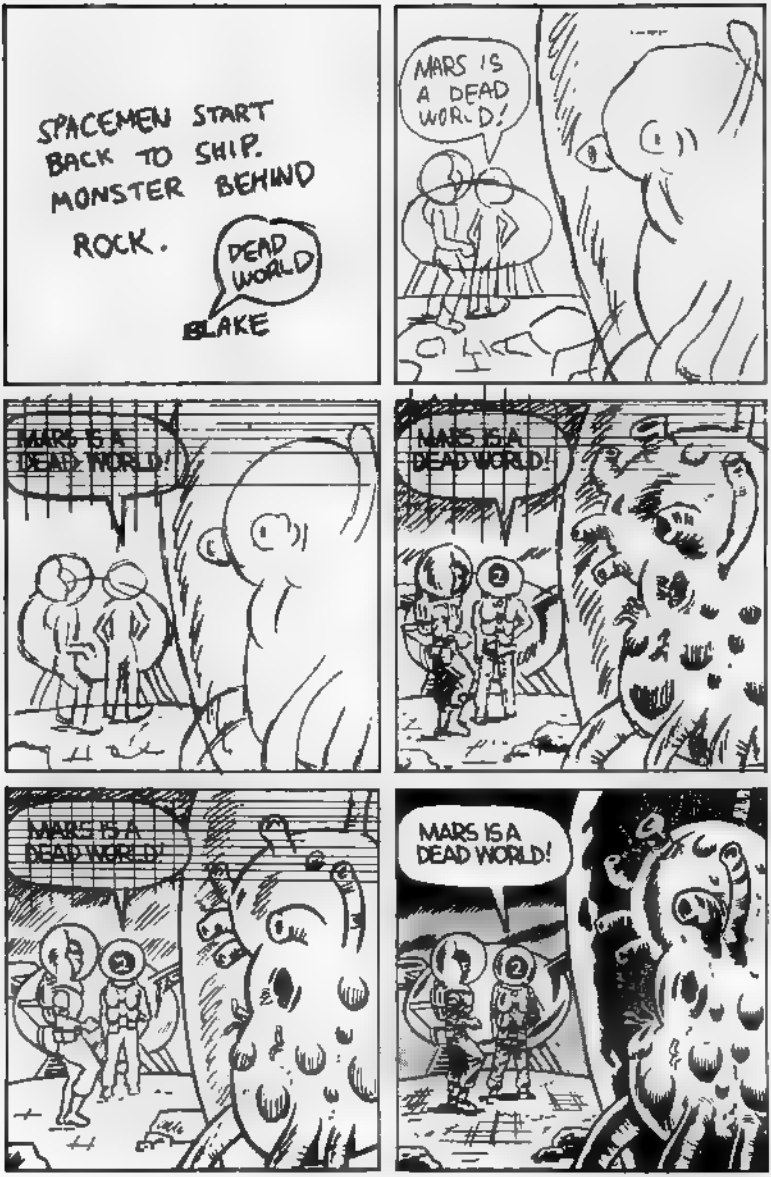
c. Bust shot: One or two characters fill up the panel. No background needed.

d. Panarama: Outside of building, city, plane, forest, etc. No figures are needed but you may want to draw tiny ones. Balloon stems point in general area of characters.

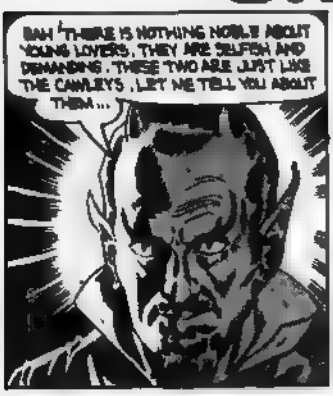
F. ANATOMY

Most Amateurs realize early in their drawing career that comic book artists do not use proper anatomy. Those who draw humor of course rarely use the correct proportions. Often their characters are three, two or one and a half heads tall but even those who draw realistic adventure comics

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

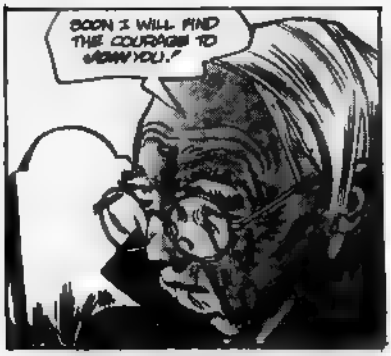

SPACEMEN START BACK TO SHIP. MONSTER BEHIND ROCK.
DEAD WORLD
BLAKE
MARS IS A DEAD WORLD!
MARS IS A DEAD WORLD!
MARS IS A DEAD WORLD!
MARS IS A DEAD WORLD!
MARS IS A DEAD WORLD!

GREY!


BAH! THERE IS NOTHING NOBLE ABOUT YOUNG LOVERS. THEY ARE SELFISH AND DEMANDING. THESE TWO ARE JUST LIKE THE CAVALEY'S. LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THEM...

BEN DAY
ALSO KNOWN AS "ZIP"

CROSS HATCHING
MOST COMMONLY USED TECHNIQUE



WASH
OFTEN USED IN BLACK AND WHITE BUT RARELY IN COLOR COMICS

CRAFTINT
SINGLE ON FACE, DOUBLE ON COAT

PANEL ART

STAND BACK, ALL OF YOU! WHEN I FIND OUT WHICH OF YOU IS MY BELOVED SHUA, THEN THE OTHER TWO SHALL REMAIN THIS ACCURSED LAND WITHOUT THEIR HEADS BY BLADE & BOLDIK SWIFT
ALL OF YOU, MOUNT TIGA AND BE CERTAIN THAT I SHALL BE WATCHING EACH OF YOU CLOSELY
HOW ironic IT WOULD BE IF I WERE TO BE SLAIN BY THE MAN I LOVE
I CANNOT TEST THEM WITH QUESTIONS BECAUSE I KNOW LITTLE OF SHUA SPEAKING HER NAME YESTERDAY WAS THE FIRST TIME I SAW THE LOVELY MAIDEN.

(1) **STANDARD SHOT:** COMPOSE YOUR PANEL INTO *FOREGROUND* (THREE GIRLS) *MIDDLEGROUND* (SWORDSMAN) AND *BACKGROUND* (ROCK FORMATION AND MOUNT [TIGA]) NOTE THE THIN LINES, LACK OF SHADING AND LACK OF DETAIL ON TIGA.

(2) **DOWNSHOT:** SOMETIMES CALLED *BIRD'S-EYE VIEW*

(3) **UPSHOT:** SOMETIMES CALLED A *WORM'S-EYE VIEW*. TIGA IS NOW IN THE FORE[illegible]. NOTE THE *BOLD* LINES, STRONG SHADOWS AND DETAIL.

A GOOD GENERAL RULE IS THAT THINGS IN THE FOREGROUND ARE DARKER AND MORE DETAILED THAN BACKGROUND FIGURES. *BEGINNERS* MAKE THE MISTAKE OF HANDLING ALL OBJECTS ALIKE ALSO *SIMPLIFY*/GOOD COMPOSITION WILL HELP YOU TO SIMPLIFY YOUR WORK!

PANELS

IF I HYPNOTIZED YOU, THERE WOULD BE NO PERCEPTIBLE HEART-BEAT OR RESPIRATION YOU COULD EXIST LIKE THIS FOR FORTY-EIGHT HOURS OR MORE!

CLOSE-UP

CLOSE-UP

BUST

SILHOUETTE

THEY HONEYMOONED IN MIAMI AT THE MOST EXPENSIVE ROOM IN THE MOST EXPENSIVE HOTEL IN THE STATE.
ARE YOU HAPPY, NATHAN?
I MOST CERTAINLY AM, DARLING.

PANARAMA

OPEN

FLASH BACK

seem to throw Grey's anatomy and DaVinci's treatises on anatomy out the window. This is not true! Anatomy is exaggerated by comic book artists but it is not ignored. The biggest mistake a budding young artist can make is to create his own proportions before he knows the correct proportions *cold!* Though it may seem boring and restrictive *study your anatomy!* Your composition and rendering may be superb but one badly drawn hand will give you a flat rejection from any editor.

G. REDUCTION AND REPRODUCTION

Always keep in mind that your work is going to be reduced to comic book size (6" x 9"). If your work is too detailed, if your lines are too thin or too numerous, and if your black and grey areas are too heavy then reduction will be disastrous to your work. Remember that you are working to create a piece of art that will reproduce well. Keep your work clear. Bold, sure lines, good composition and proper spotting of your blacks will help.

A. SCRIPT

A comic book script may be submitted in two forms: typewritten or animated. In the animated form the script is sketched out by the writer as it will appear in the comics with the panel break downs, dialogue balloons and stick figures acting out the movement. There are a few companies, usually those who deal almost entirely with children's humor titles, which will only accept scripts in animated form but most companies insist on typewritten scripts and that is the form which will be discussed.

1. Title Page: Note the title of your story, your name below the title, the title of the book in which the story will appear (if known), the number of pages, and your address and phone.

2. Numbers:

a. Script Page: Upper right hand corner of each page in numerical form.

b. Story Page: Top center of each page of your story in written form.

c. Panel: Identify each panel by number and start again from "ONE" when you begin a new page.

3. Body:

a. Action: Describe what is going on in the panel. Include props, important details of setting, clothing, etc., but don't get carried away. Be brief and let the artist use his imagination.

b. Caption: Every panel does not have to have a caption and how often to use them is up to the style of the story. Horror is heavy on captions while humor is light to none. Use captions to set a mood, time, passage of time, setting or to describe an action which took place between the panels.

c. Dialogue: Note who is talking and if necessary a word or two on the tone of the character's speech. For example - John (angrily): How could you do this to me!

B. STORY LINE

1. Movement: Do not bog the action down by writing page after page of

9

PAGE SEVEN

1. CAPTION: Edmund Higgs timed it so he arrived in the night ...

ACTION: He approaches house. Hee hee hee hee hee hee laughter is light, small. Edmund is spooked, listens.

EDMUND: My nerves are playing tricks on me! Even now ... years later ... I imagine I still hear that ghastly laugh!

2. ACTION: Open door. He holds match. Or use whatever lighting you like but make it eerie. Edmund's attitude suggests fear.

EDMUND: Is anybody h-here?

3. ACTION: He's seen thru doorframe. Has lamp now.

EDMUND: Th-this is better! It's musty in here ... musty as the grave!

4. ACTION: Edmund paused in doorway, narrow panel, eyes wide, afraid.

EDMUND: Th-the old man is right where I left him!

5. ACTION: Edmund seen. Back of chair. Hand holding gun is on desk. Edmund has shake lines, lamp, approaching desk.

EDMUND: Y-you can't harm me now, you old fool! Remember when you said you'd kill me if I touched a penny of your money? Remember when you said you'd have the last laugh?

two characters making long speeches to one another. You are not writing comics to show off your prose style. Comics is a visual medium. Give the artist interesting settings, change your settings whenever possible and use close ups from time to time so that the page will not be heavy with detail. Nothing hurts a writer's ego more than to have an artist or editor change his script. Put yourself in the artist's shoes and changes will not be necessary.

2. Flow: Days, weeks, even years must pass in the short span of six to eight pages. Do not make the action jumpy. Lead into a time change by using such dialogue as: "I'll see you tomorrow at the dance." The next panel may not be at the dance but when the dance does occur at least the reader is expecting it and it won't suddenly happen without warning.

3. Concise: You have a very limited space to tell a story. Do not bring in unnecessary characters, dialogue or events. Everything must have a direct bearing on the outcome of the plot. If you think your story through before typing it out then you won't write yourself into a corner and have to pull in a new character or have a weapon appear out of nowhere in order to save your hero.

4. Mechanics: How many panels on a page? How many words in a balloon? It will vary according to the category and script action. The average page has from five to seven panels on it. Pick out one main panel per page and have all the other panels leading toward or away from it. There are usually two balloons in a panel with a maximum of thirty words per balloon. All these statistics are only guides and will change according to the needs of the story.

5. Ideas: Ideas for stories come from everywhere. Saturate your mind with story plots by reading as much as you can, watching as many movies as money will allow and as much drama on television as you can stand. Eventually you will learn all of the repeated plots so you can avoid them or at least give them a new twist. Ideas also come from newspapers and often from text books. Many great stories were based on scientific, philosophic and even mathematical ideas. Another source of stories is life itself. Take incidents that have occurred to you or friends and exaggerate them. A ride on the subway may take you into the land of the mole people or a rat hole may be the dwelling of a tiny man.

C. CODE

Unless you are writing for the black and white comic magazines or for the underground comics you will have to have stories approved by the comics code authority. A copy of the code is included. Read it before you write.

D. GRAMMAR

Editors and proofreaders are often fighting to keep a deadline. Mistakes slow things down so if you can't spell or use proper grammar you may find your assignments cut no matter how brilliant your ideas are.

E. SYNOPSIS

Along with your script it is wise to send a short outline of a few sentences for the editor to read first. If you don't, the busy editor may not bother to read your script.

LETTERING

A. TOOLS:

1. Lettering pens: Speedball puts out a good line. Speedball B-6 is good.
2. Pencil and Erasers.
3. Tee Square.
4. Lettering Guide: Aimes is best.
5. Ink: Any good grade of India Ink.

B. YOU BEGIN TO LETTER:

1. Rule lines for the letters with your tee square and lettering guide.
2. Cross these guide lines with vertical lines for standard lettering and slanted lines for italic. Leave larger spaces between letters you are going to heavy up for emphasis. Some letterers prefer to underline emphasized words.

C. LETTER STYLES:

1. Standard: Used for dialogue and / or captions.
2. Italic: Used in captions or to show tension.
3. Bold: Emphasis on key words or names.
4. Wavy: Ghostly voice
5. Open: Sound effect or scream.
6. Tiny: Whispering.

D. BALLOONS:

The shapes of balloons depict the mood or source of the dialogue.

1. Dialogue: Cloud or oval. Stem points to speaker.
2. Thought: Cloud with more curves than dialogue cloud and bubbles, instead of a stem, points to the character.
3. Telephone: Jagged border. This may also be used for any electronic voice such as robot, loud speaker, computer, etc.

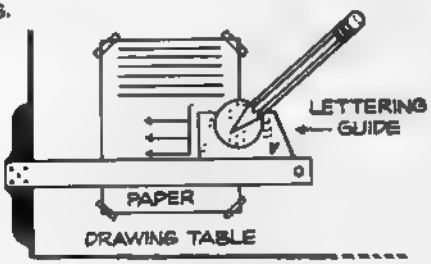
LETTERING

HERE ARE A FEW HINTS TO PRACTICE FOR *GOOD* LETTERING:

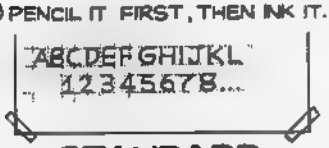
① ALWAYS USE GUIDELINES.

AMES LETTERING GUIDE.

COMES WITH INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE IT.

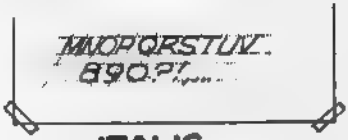


② PENCIL IT FIRST, THEN INK IT.



STANDARD

FOR VERTICAL GUIDELINES USE RIGHT ANGLE OF GUIDE OR A TRIANGLE.



ITALIC

FOR SLANTED GUIDELINES USE 68° SIDE OF GUIDE.

③ PRETEND THAT EVERY LETTER IS IN AN IMAGINARY BOX, AS SHOWN ABOVE (2) AND BELOW (4)

④ KEEP A *UNIFORM* SPACE BETWEEN LETTERS AND WORDS.

ABCDE HI, MARY! HI, FRED!

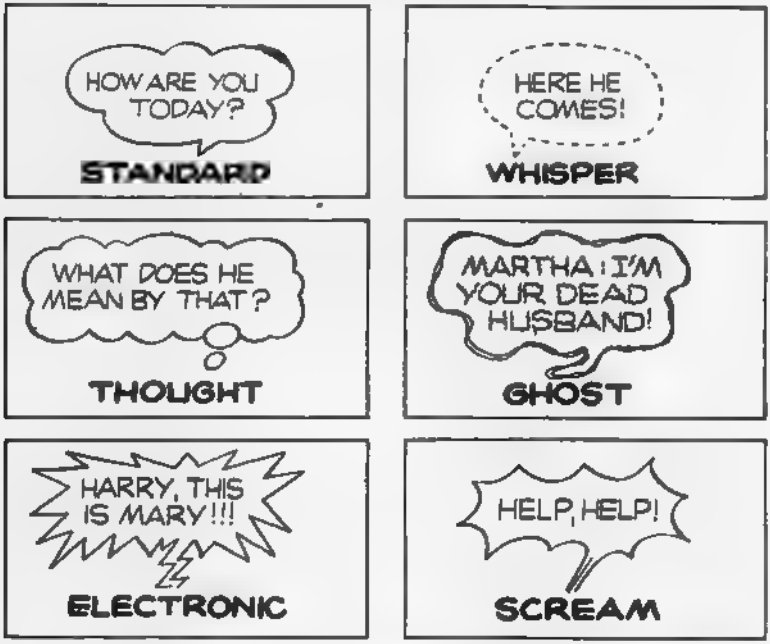
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ ?!""...

1234567890

⑤ HAVE *CONFIDENCE* IN YOURSELF! DON'T RUSH. *PRACTICE* A LOT. DON'T GIVE UP! *GOOD LUCK!*

Frank Brave

BALLOONS AND ONOMATOPOEIAS



TITLE LOGOS

4. Whisper: Dotted line border.
5. Ghostly: Wavy line border.

E. PANELS:

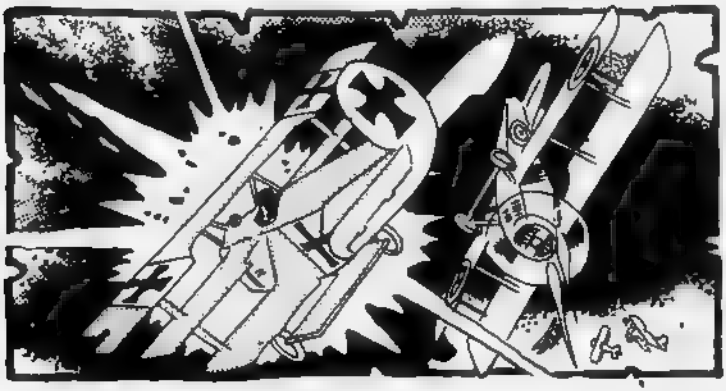
Letterers are expected to ink in panel borders. Use a straight edge that is slightly raised from the paper so that the ink will not slip under your edge and smear. The only panels which are inked free hand with a brush are flash back panels.

F. LETTERING BOOKS:

There are several booklets on lettering put out by Speedball,Higgins and Ko-i-nor. If your local art or drafting supply store doesn't carry them, then send to these companies. Learn the basics and practice!

G. SWIPES:

Like the comic artist, you will also need a swipe file. Whenever you see an interesting title design cut it out and save it for when you need to draw a logo or story title. Logos are usually photostats which are pasted onto artwork by a staff artist so you needn't worry about them unless you are asked to design a logo.



COMIC GROUPS

Included here are some of the basic groups of comics with comments on the art styles and writing.

A. HUMOR

1. People: Big foot stuff. Use lots of sight gags leading to a funny conclusion. Artwork should not have too much detail. Linework should be bold and sure and light on the blacks.
2. Animals: Treat the animal art and story same as people but make use of the fact that your character is an animal. If he's an alley cat, then have him live in a garbage can complete with a t.v. set. Story lines should be simple but clever.

B. ADVENTURE

1. Super Heroes: Work out a colorful costume and a unique set of super powers. Villains are an important feature. Make them powerful and/or crafty.
2. War: Details of war machines and uniforms must be accurate. Stories may be heroic or anti-war.
3. Western: Be sure you can draw horses and six guns well.
4. Historical: Do your research thoroughly. These books often find their way into classrooms.
5. Jungle: Study your foliage and animals.
6. Horror: Heavy on blacks. Lots of shadows, old houses, castles, etc. Setting and mood are important. Story may take place in modern setting but keep the mood terrifying. Dark night, thunder storms, vampires, werewolves, ghosts, monsters, mad scientists, are all standard characters.
7. Science Fiction: Most comic book science fiction is space opera. (But do not overlook the other forms of sci-fi). Props become very important - ray guns, space suits, rockets, flying devices. Next comes setting - alien worlds, rocket ship interiors, outer space. Last but not least, the aliens - intelligent, war-like, primitive, or monsters.
8. Sword and Sorcery: Also called Heroic Fantasy. Here you create your own world exactly the way it should be to make an exciting story. The only necessary ingredients are muscular, crafty, sword wielding heroes ...

beautiful heroines ... imaginatively grotesque monsters ... and magical or barbaric villains. After that you manufacture the laws — political, philosophical and natural.

C. ROMANCE

The emphasis here is on pretty girls, handsome men and clothing styles. Settings may be ordinary or in foreign lands. Boy meets girl and take it from there. Artwork should be fashion magazine style. Light, colorful with good draftsmanship.

This section on covers is not included with the chapter on art because covers are usually assigned to the best of the professionals. A beginner is rarely assigned to do a cover since this is the art which sells the book to the casual reader. However, when the day comes that an editor is so completely taken with your work that he asks you to accomplish a cover you had best know what to do.

The standard cover size is 12½" x 19". Working on cover boards will make your task easier but if you can't get your hands on cover stock then be certain to allow space for such items as the title, company seal, month, issue number, identifying character (if any), code seal and a cover blurb (e.g. "read how E-Man defeats Captain Cruel"). Sometimes a cover board will be sent to you with most of these items already glued on but often you will just have to judge how much area will be needed. Check the proportions by comparing sizes of the large cover with the reduced cover on the comic.

Also allow for trimming. Nothing will be cut off on the left hand side but some of the other three sides will be trimmed off by the cutter. Do not allow any important objects to touch the edge.

Ignore the cross hairs (registration marks) and vandercook outside the cover boarder since these are for the engravers and are no concern to the artist.

All the rules of composition, penciling and inking that applied to the panel also apply to the cover. But be certain to make the art simple, eye catching and intriguing enough to make the reader want to read the story.

WANDERCOOK E-MAN #1 OCT.

WANDERCOOK

WANDERCOOK

WANDERCOOK

CODE OF THE COMICS MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

General Standards - Part A

1. Crimes shall never be presented in such a way as to promote distrust of the forces of law and justice, or to inspire others with a desire to imitate criminals.

2. No comics shall explicitly present the unique details and methods of a crime, with the exception of those crimes that are so far-fetched or pseudo -scientific that no would - be lawbreaker could reasonably duplicate.

3. Policemen, judges, government officials and respected institutions shall not be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority. If any of these is depicted committing an illegal act, it must be declared as an exceptional case and that the culprit pay the legal price.

4. If crime is depicted it shall be as a sordid and unpleasant activity.

5. Criminals shall not be presented in glamorous circumstances, unless an unhappy end results from their ill - gotten gains, and creates no desire for emulation.

6. In every instance good shall triumph over evil and the criminal punished for his misdeeds.

7. Scenes of excessive violence shall be prohibited. Scenes of brutal torture, excessive and unnecessary knife and gun play, physical agony, gory and gruesome crime shall be eliminated.

8. No unique or unusual methods of concealing weapons shall be shown, except where such concealment could not reasonably be duplicated.

9. Instances of law enforcement officers dying as a result of a criminal's activities should be discouraged, except when the guilty, because of their crime, live a sordid existence and are brought to justice because of the particular crime.

10. The crime of kidnapping shall never be portrayed in any detail, nor shall any profit accrue to the abductor or kidnapper. The criminal or the kidnapper must be punished in every case.

11. The letters of the word "crime" on a comics magazine cover shall never be appreciably greater in dimension than the other words contained in the title. The word "crime" shall never appear alone on a cover.

12. Restraint in the use of the word "crime" in titles or subtitles shall be exercised.

General Standards - Part B

1. No comic magazine shall use the word horror or terror in its title. These words may be used judiciously in the body of the magazine.

2. All scenes of horror, excessive bloodshed, gory or gruesome crimes, depravity, lust, sadism, masochism shall not be permitted.

3. All lurid, unsavory, gruesome illustrations shall be eliminated.

4. Inclusion of stories dealing with evil shall be used or shall be published only where the intent is to illustrate a moral issue and in no case shall evil be presented alluringly nor so as to injure the sensibilities of the reader.

5. Scenes dealing with, or instruments associated with walking dead, or torture shall not be used. Vampires, ghouls and werewolves shall be permitted to be used when handled in the classic tradition such as Frankenstein, Dracula and other high calibre literary works written by Edgar Allen Poe, Saki (H. H. Munro), Conan Doyle and other respected authors whose works are read in schools throughout the world.

6. Narcotics or Drug addiction shall not be presented except as a vicious habit.

Narcotics or Drug addiction or the illicit traffic in addiction - producing narcotics or drugs shall not be shown or described if the presentation:

(a) Tends in any manner to encourage, stimulate or justify the use of

such narcotics or drugs; or

(b) Stresses, visually, by text or dialogue, their temporarily attractive effects; or

(c) Suggests that the narcotics or drug habit may be quickly or easily broken; or

(d) Shows or describes details of narcotics or drug procurement, or the implements or devices used in taking narcotics or drugs, or of the taking of narcotics or drugs in any manner; or

(e) Emphasizes the profits of the narcotics or drug traffic; or

(f) Involves children who are shown knowingly to use or traffic in narcotics or drugs; or

(g) Shows or implies a casual attitude towards the taking of narcotics or drugs; or

(h) Emphasizes the taking of narcotics or drugs throughout, or in a major part, of the story, and leaves the denouement to the final panels.

General Standards - Part C

All elements or techniques not specifically mentioned herein, but which are contrary to the spirit and intent of the Code, and are considered violations of good taste or decency, shall be prohibited.

DIALOGUE

1. Profanity, obscenity, smut, vulgarity, or words or symbols which have acquired undesirable meanings - judged and interpreted in terms of contemporary standards - are forbidden.

2. Special precautions to avoid disparaging references to physical afflictions or deformities shall be taken.

3. Although slang and colloquialisms are acceptable, excessive use should be discouraged and wherever possible good grammar shall be employed.

RELIGION

1. Ridicule or attack on any religious or racial group is never permissible.

COSTUME

1. Nudity in any form is prohibited. Suggestive and salacious illustration is unacceptable.
2. Females shall be drawn realistically without undue emphasis on any physical quality.

MARRIAGE AND SEX

1. Divorce shall not be treated humorously nor represented as desirable.

2. Illicit sex relations are not to be portrayed and sexual abnormalities are unacceptable.

3. All situations dealing with the family unit should have as their ultimate goal the protection of the children and family life. In no way shall the breaking of the moral code be depicted as rewarding.

4. Rape shall never be shown or suggested. Seduction may not be shown.

5. Sex perversion or any inference to same is strictly forbidden.

REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

SOME CLOSING ADVICE

1. Read the comics which you plan to work for. Study them and mentally take them apart. Note the art style, dialogue, story lines. For practice, copy your favorite artists' styles until your own individual style emerges.

2. Don't come up with a great new idea for a comic book. Ideas come from within a company, either from the staff or regular free-lance contributors. Give the company what it wants and after you've had your work published regularly by a particular outfit, meet with the editor to discuss new ideas. He will listen because he respects you as a pro.

3. Don't offer your work for free. It will tag you right away as an amateur and it will not make your material more tempting since the editor is not spending his own money but his publisher's money. Also, he is legally bound to pay you if he accepts your work.

4. Include a return envelope and postage with your work.

5. Make certain your samples only include your best work of the type they're looking for.

6. Be neat! Dirt and smudges will erase and whatever won't erase ... white out or erase with an electric eraser.

CONCLUSION

Following these directions will not guarantee you work in comics since a considerable amount of talent and experience are also factors. School newspapers, small local publications, various fan publications, or just plain practice will provide some of this experience. It will be a tremendous advantage to you if you could get work as a comic artist's assistant. The experience and techniques you will pick up under the guidance of a professional cannot be equaled anywhere else.

I wish you all the best of luck and now stop reading about comics and start drawing and writing them!

HERE THEY COME!

CHARLTON
COMICS
20¢
ON SALE AT
ALL
NEWSSTANDS